



United Congregational Church



VOICES Newsletter

July 2020

Message from Pastor Nancy



CREATION BANNERS!!

On June 7th, we used for the first time our newest banners ~ Creation banners, designed and made by Katrina Clinton, who has made many of our other banners. Several years ago, to celebrate our "Creation Jazz Service", we made our own Creation banners after church: cutting and pasting animal, plants, suns, moons, stars, flowers, fish, our hand prints and much more onto brightly colored plastic table cloths. These banners lasted pretty well for a couple of years ~ but it was clearly time to replace them for more permanent banners; Katrina used our original banners as inspiration for these new ones (along with, of course, the Creation story in Genesis!). Many thanks to Ed and Faith Bourgault who ironed and hung the banners ~ no small feat!



MEET OUR NEWEST MEMBERS ~ CONFIRMED ON JUNE 21ST!!

Karry and Harry Gill first walked through our doors in July 2012 - almost exactly 8 years ago! Harry and Karry have been an active part of our church since that first day: worshipping regularly, serving as liturgists, taking part in the annual Christmas pageant, and being part of the confirmation program since it began.

Karry will be in 10th grade at Worcester Tech next year, and loves coming to church; prayer and living a faithful life is most important to him. While he doesn't much like talking or reading in front of large crowds, he likes everything else about church.

Harry hopes to be accepted into Worcester Tech as a 9th grader next year. He likes playing video games and relaxing at home. He tries to follow the teachings of Jesus and be like Jesus in the things he does.

Lizzie LaBranche started coming to United just a couple of years ago, with her stepmother, Audrey White. She has come to love this church, and asked to be baptized here; we baptized her in our Easter service in 2019. Lizzie is grateful for the strength and courage God gives her, and for all the ways God has helped her stay strong through hard times.

FAITHFUL DISCIPLESHIP

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us (Hebrews 12:1)”.

Scripture constantly reminds us that one of the most important virtues any disciple can possess is faithfulness, or the ability to remain focused on what is really important. Throughout the past few months, United Congregational Church has indeed displayed faithfulness. Despite difficulties, we have continued to run the race, and keep on serving God and God’s people.

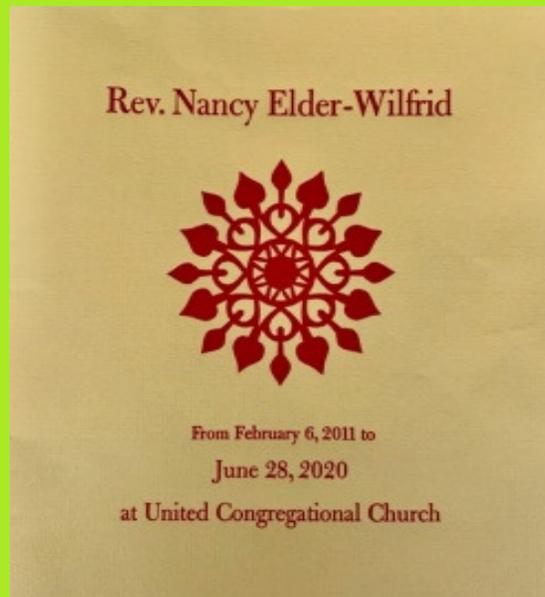
When the COVID-19 epidemic made physical gatherings impossible, our congregation figured out how to worship through Zoom. After the Pastor and church volunteers could no longer visit residences, the Spiritual Life & Diaconate Ministry began sending greeting cards, and making phone calls to our less mobile members. And when community ministries suspended in-person participation, the Missions & Outreach Ministry raised thousands of dollars on line for organizations working to end homelessness.

Our faithfulness continues. On June 28th, dedicated church volunteers organized a meaningful (and emotional) farewell service for The Reverend Nancy Elder-Wilfrid, who is retiring after many years of ministry. Nancy’s departure does not leave us without a Pastor however. Thanks to the tremendous efforts of our search team, The Reverend Julie Cedrone will begin serving United as a Bridge Pastor on July 13th. Our congregation also keeps making donations to the Carty Food Cupboard, and has even begun new spiritual practices like the Tuesday night prayer gatherings being done on Zoom.

It truly does seem like whenever United Congregational Church has encountered an obstacle, we have figured out ways to overcome it. The dedication of our congregation can be seen in the countless hours members have spent on church matters, and their willingness to try new ways of Christian Education, worship, and mission. These abilities will serve us well in the months ahead. Beginning the search for a Settled Pastor, safely resuming physical worship services, and finding new (and safe) ways to serve those in need are only a few of the challenges we face. Yet I remain confident. Our devotion to God, and our commitment to carrying out God’s work and spreading God’s love in the world, will allow us to continue as faithful and effective disciples!

Praying for your strength in body & spirit,

Tim Camp



THANK YOU!!

Thank you, dear friends, for the wonderful service together on June 28th ~ those of you able to be at United in person, and those of you joining via Zoom...certainly not the way I expected to end my ministry, nor the way any of us expected to say good-bye ~ but by some great grace, it worked ~ thanks in no small part to the amazing job by so many people in pulling together a celebration within all the limits of physical distancing necessitated by COVID.

I don't dare start naming names, because I know much of the planning went on "behind closed doors", so please - if you were part of growing plants, arranging seats and banners and flowers and bulletins and people, buying Kleenex and bottled water and sanitizer, designing and printing bulletins and signs and song sheets, greeting and ushering and taking temperatures, and all the rest of a celebration complicated by COVID ~ know I am grateful! So very grateful!

Thank you!! Although I couldn't see many of your faces, I loved seeing the variety of masks on display.... (I'm making lemonade here - I would MUCH MUCH MUCH rather have been able to see your faces, and share hugs and embraces and tears in person); and although I couldn't see those of you joining by Zoom, every once in a while, I would catch a glimpse of a name or a face, and be filled with gratitude....

Thank you for your notes and gifts ~ especially the gift to our local garden center, which is a truly wonderful place! I will look for a tree or plantings to remember you by in the years to come (as if I would really need much to remind me!).

I said in my sermon that one of your gifts is the welcome you give to anyone who walks through your doors, and I want you to know how much our "Beggar" musicians have loved coming to United, and how welcome they have always felt. Both Chris and Dave said that coming to United has become part of their yearly routine, and they have always loved the spirit of welcome and grace they experience here. Karen and Greg are, not surprisingly, fairly discerning about churches, and they both have considered United a church home, and have loved being able to provide music together on Christmas Eve; Karen and Chris loved providing music on Easter...they will all miss United and being part of this community of faith!

I carry with me the gift of so many memories of our ministry together, and truly ~ cannot have had a more "perfect" church to share my last years of ministry. I have been blessed. Thank you!

With love and gratitude,
Nancy

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MUSIC NOTES

Hello Friends!

It's been awhile since I've greeted you. These are difficult times, but we've managed to find creative ways to worship together.

Special thanks to Audrey White for her beautiful viola solo on "Lift Every Voice and Sing" on Confirmation Sunday. For Nancy's farewell service, we were treated to the music of the Jolly Beggars: Greg Wilfrid, Chris Vece, and Dave Uhl plus Liz Oman, voice. We thank Karen Wilfrid for her mighty organ Prelude and Postlude. We will miss them, but with luck, will be able to entice them back in the future.

For the past three weeks, I've been coming to the church to provide the music for our Zoom worship services. With just Ed and our preacher of the day in the building, this is safe. I've enjoyed leading you in the hymns, and hope to continue doing so. We shall all worship in person again someday.

Musical blessings to all of you!
Mae Stroshane, Music Minister

CARTY CUPBOARD UPDATE



The Carty Food Cupboard continues to feed the hungry this summer, despite the current COVID-19 crisis. Every Wednesday, cars line up at 114 Main Street in Worcester to receive several bags of needed groceries. The Cupboard is able to continue its mission largely because of donations received from our congregation and several other downtown churches. United Congregational Church members have been especially supportive, contributing \$130 this past week alone!

Presently Carty Cupboard is in need of canned fruit, especially the ones packed in natural juices. Grocery store gift cards are also appreciated, as they are used by clients with special dietary needs that can't be met directly by the Cupboard. Cards can be from any local supermarket chain, and \$10 or \$20 denominations are best. I am currently delivering donations to Carty, and am willing to meet anyone outside our church building week days after 2:30 pm., or any time on Sunday, to pick them up. Grocery cards can be mailed to me, as well as financial donations, which I will use to purchase supplies. Thanks to everyone who has helped this vital ministry, and please feel free to contact me anytime for more information!

PLEASE NOTE: THERE HAVE BEEN SOME PREVIOUS MISPRINTS OF MY HOME ZIP CODE. CORRECT ONE IS: 01545

Peace & Blessings,

Tim Camp

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United Calendar & Prayer Intentions



CALENDAR:

JULY PRAYER INTENTIONS:

We are a community of faith: praying for and with each other! Each week in our Sunday bulletin, we list several members of United for whom we pray during the coming week. We are including that list in Voices so that those who are unable to come to church will know who is being prayed for, and can join their prayers with ours.

For Sunday, July 5th: James & Olive Eakin, Mary Flynn, Peter Fraga, Pat Gibb.

For Sunday, July 12th: Arthur, Harry, Karry Gill, Ruby Nazir, Dorista & John Goldsberry.

For Sunday, July 19th: Cherie Grant & Steven Pietrowicz, Stacey Heath.

For Sunday, July 26th: Amy Hennig & Angelina & Nick Johnson, Joy Hennig & Gloria Beaudry.

We pray for them to feel the blessing of our prayer as deeply as they feel the loving presence of God.

Resources

UCC Lectionary Information (<http://www.macucc.org/pages/detail/220>)

United Congregational Church (<http://www.ucc-worcester.org>)

UCC Mass Conference (<http://macucc.org/>)

National UCC Web Page (<http://www.ucc.org/>)